

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VISIT TO USA OF ITALIAN CABLE TV COMMITTEE-BRIEFING NOTES
FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DOBBIN JUNE 14 LUNCHEON

REF: ROME 7485

1. ITALIAN ANXIETY AVOID GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT FLAVOR AT LUNCHEON NOTED PARA 2 REFTEL MAY REFLECT NOT ONLY POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF GENERAL TELEVISION QUESTION IN ITALY BUT COMMITTEE DESIRE AVOID IMPASSE SIMILAR TO THAT IN COLOR TV WHICH RESULTED FRENCH-GERMAN GOVERNMENT PRESSURES FOR SECAM AND PAL SYSTEMS. DESPITE CLEAR STATEMENT OF ITALIAN INDUSTRY AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS SEVERAL YEARS AGO FOR PAL AND NEED TO INJECT NEW LIFE INTO DEPRESSED CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SECTOR GOI HAS REFUSED TO MAKE ANY DECISION IN LAST DECADE.

2. EMBASSY INFORMED BY JERROLD OF ITS MEETINGS WITH COMMITTEE AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS. FROM THESE IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT FRENCH ARE MAJOR COMPETITION AS A) SEVERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS (AND POSSIBLY COMMITTEE) HAVE BEEN GUESTS AT FRENCH CABLE TV DEVELOPMENT CENTER AT RENNES, B) FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN ROME'S MARCH 1974 ELECTRONICS/NUCLEAR SHOW SEMINAR PROGRAM (N.B. JERROLD WAS ONLY CABLE TV FIRM IN SEMINAR AND IN SHOW ITSELF) HIGHLIGHTED BY APPROACHING

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SUBJECT FROM BASIC PRINCIPLES, I.E. QUOTE REINVENTING WHEEL UNQUOTE,

IMPRESSED ITALIANS THROUGH INTELLECTUAL NATURE OF PRESENTATION, C) SEVERAL FRENCH CONCEPTS, E.G. SECURITY ADVANTAGE OF SIGNAL DECODING DEVICES ON CENTRAL LINES RATHER THAN IN EACH INSTALLATION, APPEAL TO INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND D) ONE MEMBER, ORSINI OF SIP (SEE PARA 4 BELOW), TOLD JERROLD HOW IMPRESSED HE WAS WHEN FINANCE MINISTER GISCARD D'ESTAING DISCUSSED CABLE TV IN GENERAL TERMS AT DINNER SOMETIME BACK. JERROLD TOLD EMBASSY FRENCH REALLY HAVE NO USABLE SYSTEM ALTHOUGH WHAT THEY DO HAVE IS ON STANDARDS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ANYONE ELSE. FIRM FEELS HOWEVER THAN FRENCH LOOKING TO ITALIAN MARKET TO MAKE VOLUME SUFFICIENT TO WARRANT DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF CABLE TV.

3. JERROLD BELIEVES BRITISH REDIFFUSION, WHILE APPEALING TO SIP TELEPHONE COMPANY BECAUSE OF USE OF PHONE LINES, HAS LOST WHATEVER POTENTIAL IT ENJOYED IN SUMMER 1973, THAT PHILIPS IS IN WEAK POSITION AS ITS SYSTEM NOT EVEN APPROVED BY DUTCH PTT AND THAT SIEMENS NOT YET FAR ENOUGH ALONG.

4. WHILE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN IS PROF CAPPUCINI, AS USUAL IN THIS TYPE OF BODY APPOINTED FROM OUTSIDE THE GOI, WHO MUST BE GIVEN ALL THE DEFERENCE DUE TO THE CHAIRMAN, JERROLD SUSPECTS MAJOR POWER ON COMMITTEE MAY BE ORSINI OF SIP TELEPHONE COMPANY. SIP EVIDENCED FIRST INTEREST IN CABLE TV AND IS BUYING JERROLD EQUIPMENT FOR TEST INSTALLATIONS. JERROLD BELIEVES DOMINANT FACTORS IN CABLE TV FUTURE WILL BE SIP WHICH CONTROLS UNDERGROUND CONDUITS IN CITIES AND IS LOOKING FOR NEW ACTIVITIES AND RAI TELEVISION WHICH WILL CONTROL PROGRAMMING. (N.B. STANDARDS TO BE ESTABLISHED BY SUPERIOR INSTITUTE TELECOMMUNICATIONS, WHICH MUST APPROVE ALL EQUIPMENT, PROBABLY WILL BE INFLUENCED BY CAPPUCINI AND BY SIP) ORSINI WAS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF RAI TELEVISION UNTIL RECENTLY AND IS NOW CONSULTANT TO VERY TOP LEVEL OF SIP. WHILE HE IS KNOWN AS A TECHNICIAN AND NOT AS POLITICIAN, HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE VERY GOOD CONTACTS IN BOTH THE POLITICAL AND SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE LEVELS OF THE GOI.

5. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DOBBINS'S LUNCHEON WILL BE THE LAST MEAL THE COMMITTEE HAS IN THE UNITED STATES PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR ITALY AFTER TWO WEEKS OF VISITS AND DISCUSSIONS. WHILE WE DEFER TO USDOC ON STRATEGY AND BELIEVE THE LOW-KEY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS APPROACH WILL BE MOST PRODUCTIVE, EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT POINTS ASSISTANT SECRETARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MIGHT WISH MAKE INCLUDE A) COMMERCIAL VIABILITY AND TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE OF SYSTEMS COMMITTEE HAS SEEN IN US-NOT PLANS OR EXPERIMENTS, BUT FUNCTIONING SYSTEMS B) CONTINUED TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES BEING MADE BY US INDUSTRY TO IMPROVE EXISTING AND DEVELOP EVEN BETTER FUTURE CABLE TV SYSTEMS AND C) READINESS OF US FIRMS TO COOPERATE WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND FIRMS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY. IN WELCOMING GROUP ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAY WISH COMMENT ON USDOC'S ROLE AS MIDDLEMAN BETWEEN FOREIGN AND US AGENCIES/INDUSTRIES AND IN STRONG

TECHNICAL INTERESTS OF MULTIFACETED DEPARTMENT. ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
IN TOUCHING ON USG INTEREST IN ASSISTANG COMMITTEE, MAY WISH
UNDERLINE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY USG ASSISTANCE THROUGH AMEMBASSY,
ROME PARTICULARLY THROUGH OFFICE OF COMMERICAL COUNSELOR. BEAUDRY

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